

can protect children by overturning these humanitarian protections, either that have been entered into in a consent decree in court or by law, and subjecting children at the border to indefinite detention and deportation without adequate due process. But there is no evidence that this will deter desperate families from fleeing to our border.

There is one thing the Senator from Utah and I certainly agree on. Many of these children and families are being horribly, horribly exploited by coyotes and kidnappers and very bad people. Many of these people and their children are suffering in unimaginable ways because of this.

I renew the plea that has been given across Central America by this administration: Don't send your people to our border. Don't send your children to our border.

It is not something we should encourage under the circumstances. It has to be orderly, and this is not in many respects.

There is no evidence that ending this humanitarian protection for children will deter desperate families fleeing to our border.

The bill before us today includes no assurances that children will be humanely treated or that they will be safe from violence once they are deported. This notion that once these children come across the border or are taken into custody by the U.S. Government, that sometime—2 weeks, 4 weeks, 6 weeks—later they are turned loose again does not dispense our moral obligation. We want these children to be safe, and that is what the laws are, the Flores decision and others.

This bill does nothing to address root causes that are causing migrants to flee the Northern Triangle in record numbers. If people were migrating because of so-called legal loopholes, they would be coming to our southern border from all over the region.

Instead, the vast majority come from three countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Those countries have the highest homicide rates, some of them, in the world, and girls face a constant threat of sexual violence with little prosecution from local authorities. We are doing desperate things because of the desperate situations in these countries.

We are told by the Senator that we have to overturn the bipartisan Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, which passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and was signed into law by Republican President George W. Bush. But the TVPRA ensures that the United States meets its international obligations to protect unaccompanied children seeking safe haven in our country. It was a response to bipartisan concern that children apprehended by the Border Patrol were being returned to countries where they might be exploited even more.

Under TVPRA, unaccompanied children from the Northern Triangle are transferred to the Department of

Health and Human Services and placed in deportation proceedings, which gives them a chance to finally make their case to a judge.

Consider Samuel and Amelie, siblings ages 3 and 6, from Honduras. They arrived in the United States traumatized, ages 3 and 6. They said nothing—silent. After being transferred to HHS, Amelie revealed that both children had been raped by drug cartel members. Without TVPRA protection, Samuel and Amelie would have been returned to Honduras and almost certain further exploitation.

Democrats are trying to work on a bipartisan repair of this immigration system. It is long overdue.

In 2019, after President Trump finally agreed to end the longest government shutdown in history, Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill that included \$414 million for humanitarian assistance at the border and then passed an emergency supplemental for \$4.6 billion of additional funding to alleviate overcrowding in detention facilities.

In 2018, Senate Democrats supported a bipartisan agreement, including robust border security funding and dozens of provisions to strengthen border security, but President Trump threatened to veto it and, instead, pushed for his hardline plan with the largest cut in legal immigration in almost a century.

When it comes to refugees, after World War II, when the United States sadly turned away hundreds and thousands of ultimate victims of the Holocaust and would not accept their refugee status, we set out to prove to the world that we had learned a valuable lesson, and we led the world in offering refugee status until President Trump, who brought the numbers down to record low levels. That does not speak well for the United States, or it shouldn't be a source of pride for anyone reflecting this administration.

We need comprehensive immigration reform. I support it. Eight years ago, in 2013, I was part of the Gang of 8, a bipartisan group of four Republican and four Democratic Senators. We produced comprehensive immigration reform legislation that passed the Senate 68 to 32. The Senator from Utah voted against it. Unfortunately, Republicans who controlled the House of Representatives refused to consider it.

So here is my invitation to the Senator from Utah and to everyone else interested. Let us sit down again and write that bill. Let's do it in a fashion that really does bring reform to our system.

I just talked at a bipartisan meeting on the subject earlier. One of the Senators from a border State said: People in my State don't expect the Federal Government to do anything because it has been so many years since they have done anything.

It is time for us to prove them wrong. We have the authority. We have the opportunity. We have the challenge.

Making this sort of request on the floor, I know, is symbolic, but I have to say that it is not the symbolism we should follow, and I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The senior Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I appreciate the sentiment expressed by my friend, my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois, particularly when he expressed the desire no longer to have people send their children on the long, perilous journey from Central America to the United States. On that, he and I certainly agree, just as we have agreed on a number of other issues over the years.

I do think it is regrettable that we are not able to reach this agreement today. This is something we ought to be able to solve right here, right now. This is a very dire set of circumstances.

We have to remember what we are talking about is dealing with the Flores agreement. We are in a position where so many of the children coming up through these caravans are in danger because we have in place policies that require the release of minors to any adult claiming to be the child's parent. We ought to have expedited processing requirements for unaccompanied minors, just as we have in place already for unaccompanied minors coming from Mexico and coming from Canada.

It makes me wonder: What is it about children from Central American countries—from any country other than Canada and Mexico—that makes them undeserving of that same expedited processing requirement? This is something we need to do.

Yes, I understand that our immigration system is a mess and needs reform, but I don't understand why it is that anyone would want to accept the default assumption that we can't fix anything with immigration; we can't even fix this problem subjecting these unaccompanied minors from Central American countries, including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Why can't we give them any relief here until such time as we can come up with a comprehensive immigration reform proposal?

It is disappointing to me that we can't do that today. We will keep trying, keep moving on this effort. This is important.

Look, regardless of where one stands politically, what party one belongs to, I don't think it is too much to ask to suggest that we shouldn't give kids over to anyone claiming to be their parent without proof, without processes to make sure that is a safe person. We wouldn't want our own children treated that way. We shouldn't treat them that way.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator from Illinois.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that cloture on

Calendar No. 30, the nomination of Adewale O. Adeyemo, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, be withdrawn and, notwithstanding rule XXII, on Thursday, March 25, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session and vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; further, that no further motions be in order, that any related statements be printed in the RECORD, that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I want to come to the floor to bring up four subjects. The first one is 30 seconds.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Madam President, we hear from Democrats that they want to do things in a bipartisan way. Last year, Senator WYDEN and I developed a bipartisan bill that would save the taxpayers \$95 billion and reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

Everybody wants that. President Trump wanted it, President Biden wanted it, and there is no reason why in 1 week we couldn't get that bill passed. We don't have to wait until several weeks down the road to do something like that.

It didn't come up last Congress because both Senator SCHUMER and Senator MCCONNELL were against it. It is bipartisan. We ought to move on that.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 949 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

BORDER SECURITY

Madam President, on another subject, I want to speak again about the border crisis created by the Biden administration. I spoke on this subject just last week, and the situation has not improved since then.

Encounters with family units and unaccompanied alien children continue to increase. There are now new reports that at some segments of the border, illegal immigrants are being released into the interior of the United States without receiving a notice to appear in immigration court. To be clear, it appears that the administration is now releasing some illegal immigrants into the United States without even attempting to give them immigration court dates, much less taking any real steps to ensure that they actually schedule their hearings and show up for their court dates in the future.

Once again, this is totally unacceptable. This is catch-and-release without even pretending to care whether the immigrants show up for court or are removed from the country in the fu-

ture. This is also not sustainable. Every sovereign nation has a right as well as a duty to its citizens to control its borders. What we are seeing from this administration isn't border control or security. You see it on television. It is chaos. It is what happens when you broadcast to the world that you have no intention of enforcing our Nation's immigration laws.

The President could take action to end this crisis today if he actually wanted to. He could restore the Migrant Protection Protocols and the asylum cooperative agreements that the Trump administration signed with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

He could start building more physical infrastructure along our southern border as administrations of both parties have done for over 20 years, including the administration in which Biden served as Vice President. Fencing isn't something new, and it has not been a partisan issue until just here lately.

Rather than propose unserious blanket amnesty legislation that contains no real border security, the President could work with Congress on common-sense changes to our immigration laws that we all know are needed.

Finally, the President could make clear that he is in favor of fully enforcing our immigration laws as written, across the board, remembering that he takes an oath that has the words to "faithfully execute" the laws.

Unfortunately, this administration believes that the surge in illegal immigration at the southern border, due to its policies, is a process to be managed rather than a crisis to be stopped. As long as that is the case, we won't be able to truly secure our border and cut off the flow of illegal immigration to this country. Let's hope things change soon.

ELECTION OF MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS

Madam President, on one other very short matter, I want to speak about something that is going on in the House of Representatives that I think we all ought to abhor. Congress should not overturn a legal, State-certified election.

I defended President Trump's right to litigate claims of election irregularities in our independent court system and defer to the judgment of independent judges. I was initially criticized for that position by partisans on the left who wanted me to make some sort of independent determination of election claims before the courts had ruled. I maintained my deference to the independent judges once the courts had ruled and Trump partisans did not like the rulings. So what happened? It led to criticism of me from the right then.

When objections were raised to counting certain States' electoral votes based upon State-certified elections, I voted against overturning those elections.

My position remains the same with respect to the purpose of my remarks today, and that is the State-certified

election of Representative MILLER-MEEKS, who now ably represents Iowa's Second Congressional District.

MILLER-MEEKS' opponent chose to forgo her right under Iowa law to present any claims of election irregularities to an independent panel of judges. Guess what. That is because, under Iowa law, she had no legal claim. Representative MILLER-MEEKS won fair and square as certified by Iowa's bipartisan election board.

The House Administration Committee is moving forward with a process to overturn this certified election, stating it will "exercise its discretion to depart from Iowa law." That is a quote I just gave from information given by the House Administration Committee.

They are proposing that the House of Representatives exercise its discretion to depart from Iowa law. They were elected under Iowa law. Every one of the 435 Congressmen were elected under the laws of their State. Isn't it a little bit outrageous that people would say we should ignore the law of Iowa in this case?

I hope that we can get every one of Iowa's four Congressmen and -women to vote to keep MILLER-MEEKS in office, and I want to hear from every one of my colleagues who decried overturning State-certified elections in January if each still holds that position.

Of course, attention to the Press Gallery—I was asked more times than I can count if I accepted the results of the Presidential election. It would be very timely and a very relevant question to ask Senators in the hallways if they accept the certified election of Representative MILLER-MEEKS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I am glad to hear the distinguished Senator, my colleague and friend, speak about the problems on the southern border.

I feel for President Biden because he inherited a horrible mess from his predecessor, a man who said that he would build a wall, which he didn't—a wall that would stop illegal immigration, which it didn't—and that he would build it, saying he would get the money from Mexico, knowing that he would not get 1 cent from Mexico, but he repeated that falsehood hundreds of times around this country. He also actually took money away from housing for families on our military bases, from families living in substandard housing. It was money that Congress had voted for to repair the housing to make it safe, to remove lead, mold, and so on. He took that money to build a wall that he claimed, as I said, Mexico would pay for.

When I was the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, we passed by about a 2-to-1 margin, after months and months and months of debate and work, an immigration bill here in the